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## **Social Stigmatization of Manjo People and its Socio-Economic and Environmental Implications, the Cases of Bonga and Dawro Towns and Their Environs**

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### **Abstract**

The Manjo People are among the most marginalized groups from the many nations and nationalities in southern parts of Ethiopia. They have been excluded from various social services and standards. Hence, the main objective of this study was to assess livelihood, folklore and marginalization of the Manjo people as well as the implications of marginalization on the environment. It was conducted in Bonga and Dawro towns and their environs. The study was a qualitative descriptive survey. For the study, 20 resourceful persons were selected by using purposive sampling method both from the insiders and the outsiders. Methods of data collection included active observation, interview and case study. Photographs and video records were also involved. The study disclosed that folklore is one of the major instruments that help to deepen and sustain marginalization of the Manjo people. Folklore makes the Manjo to believe and accept the stereotype that they are weaker, less intellect, inferior, less human than the non-Manjo; on the contrary, it assists the non-Manjo to rationalize their mistreating of the Manjo people in public. Even if attempts were made to minimize the problem of marginalization, in some cases, the attempts further worsened the problem. This was because of the fact that while some enlightened Manjo claimed equal rights, some conservative non-Manjo opposed the claims. The study also revealed that the people of Manjo have less access to various natural resources than the non-Manjo.

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As a result, they are forced to engage in less productive, environmentally unfriendly and precarious activities like in fuel wood and charcoal production and sale, pottery and hunting. Alleviating the problem of marginalization of the Manjo people should involve a prior in depth analysis and understanding of the problem, the folklore and the popular attitude before any attempt of intervention. Improving access of the Manjo people to various natural resources and assisting them to raise their productivity and income can also help change their food ways and in turn attitude of the non Manajo to towards them as well as can help to minimize the negative impacts of their way of life on the environment.

**Keywords:** Social Stigmatization; Folklore; Manjo People; Socio-economic; Environment; Implications.

## **1. Introduction**

### ***1.1 Background of the Study***

In the entire parts of Ethiopia, there are numerous marginalized minority groups that are defined by their occupation or speculative occupation. The overriding farming population narrates the cultural and social segregation of handcraft workforces by providing them diverse labels and considering that their careers is polluting. The members of these occupational groups included: potters (example the Mana in Kaffa, Sheka and Dawro; the Ch'inasha in Wolaita and the Hawuda in Konso), tanners (example, the Awacho of Sidama, the Degala of Dawro), smiths (example the Tumano of Kambata), weavers (example the Shamer in Gurage), woodworkers (the Fuga in Gurage), and hunters (e.g the Manjo in Kaffa, Sheka and Dawro) [7]. The unjust treatment of these occupational groups is manifested in various forms. They are economically disadvantaged, spatially isolated, politically disempowered, socially excluded and culturally inferior. These types of discrimination are definitely exhibited in all aspects of their daily life [10]. Hence, Manjo is one of the marginalized minority groups living in Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' Regional State (SNNPRS). People who speak Kafi-noono language are called Kafa. Yet, inside the Kafa society, people distinguish themselves as being Gomoro, Manno, or Manjo. Among the Kafa, Gomoro<sup>a</sup> constitutes the majority whereas the Manjo composes the marginalized minority group [28,18] also stated that the Manjo people are marginalized minority group of former hunters who live scattered all over Kafa zone and also present in the neighboring zones. In the demographic statistics of the Kafa Zone, the people of the Manjo minority are incorporated in the Kafa ethnic group. The population size of the Manjo society is estimated to be 1.4% to 5% of the total Kafa population in the Kafa Zone, which in 2009 were 712,200. The Manjo are a minority group living in pockets of the Kafa, Sheka, Bench, Maji, and Dawro zones, and the Konta special woreda in SNNPRS. They are sometimes given different names according to the area in which they reside: the Manjo in the Kafa and Sheka zones, the Manja among the Amhara and the Dawro, the Bandu among the Bench, and the Manji among the Majangir [29]. Though they are called with different names in the place they dwell in, the word Menjo will be

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<sup>a</sup>The word 'Gomoro', as indicated in [18], connotes the notion of "being above" to other groups of the Kafi-noono speaking people. Hence, though the term Kafa incorporates all the Kafi-noono speaking groups, hereafter it will be used to refer Gomoro only while other groups will be identified by their own specific group names.

used henceforth in this paper because on the one hand the paper focuses on the Manjo living in Kafa and Dawro zones and on the other the beholders prefers it. Based on research done prior to the Derg regime, in the society of Kafa, there was a social hierarchy similar to the caste system. At the apex of this hierarchy were the Gomoro, followed by occupational groups including blacksmiths (Qemmo), weavers (Shammano), potters and bards (Shatto), and tanners (Manno). The Manjo were regularly referred to as hunters and provided the lowest rank in the hierarchy. They are equal only to slaves [28]. In addition, even though the Manjo are the most significant social group in terms of population size, they are the lowest minority in the grading of their products next to Wogach, Mana, Degala respectively [1]. The lowest status might emanate from their way of life and oral literatures depict it. Occupationally, Manjo are hunters and most of their subsistence is derived from hunting wild animals such as Columbus monkey, porcupine and wild pig and from gathering and selling of forest produce such as firewood, charcoal, and honey. As the forests become increasingly depleted, Manjo are finding that their traditional subsistence activities are being declined. Some have taken up alternative occupations but especially in Kafa many have become impoverished [10,29]. The Manjo are considered as the most marginalized group in Ethiopia who are comparable to the untouchable caste in India [13]. They are considered to have a separate identity, and the non-Manjo (farmers) often note that they look physically different. Farmers consider the Manjo to be polluting because of their different dietary habits, eating wild animals and those that have died without being ritually slaughtered. Consequently, they live separately from the farmers in the forest on the edge of farmers' settlement [10]. Even if the constitution of the country assures equal rights of nations, nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia, the Manjo minority group has faced even greater marginalization and growing deprivation of access to economic and political assets [29]. Marginalization provides the framework of reference of survival strategies of individuals, families or entire communities and they may foster the adoption of short term survival strategies which may ignore long term environmental concerns [17,23]. As long as poverty continues, it will be very difficult to guarantee the long term viability of natural resources to ensure biodiversity conservation. Therefore, the main objective of this study was to assess the roles of folklore on social marginalization of the Manjo people and its implications on livelihoods and environmental wellbeing.

### ***1.2 Statement of the Problems***

The Manjo, a group from the many nations and nationalities of Southwestern Ethiopia, are the most marginalized people in the area. They are excluded from many standard social spheres. A non-Manjo, regular status, may not shake hands of or touch a Manjo. The two people do not eat each other's food, enter each other's house, and marry each other or share happiness or sadness together [11,14]. Such marginalization can arise in various ways. For some people, marginalization comes up from their being impoverished, members of ethnic minorities, refugees, illegal immigrants, females, disabled and unemployed [15]. Similarly, there are different ways that portray marginalization in which folklore is one of them. According [5] a group's image of itself and its images of other groups are reflected in its folklore. Folklore of a given group may have some qualities to reflect esoteric concepts of itself and exoteric concepts about another group. In connection with this, [22] describes that while food ways serve as powerful identity symbols for those within the group, and as means of creating and solidifying relations with those outside the group, they may also serve as the bases for negative stereotypes. For instance, Manjo's ways of food is considered as polluting among the non-Manjo neighbors that severely affected Manjo's world view and their social relations with others [18]. Throughout their relation in

history (Menjo with non Menjo), oral literature especially creation myth and explanatory tales have used to demonstrate these worldview and social relations. As [19] wrote in “the Role of Oral Poetry in Reshaping and Constructing History”, many societies have constructed indigenous accounts of the past by developing sophisticated oral traditions. In short, “folklore can shape people’s socio-cultural and political life”. For marginalized groups, poverty is a common experience. In Mexico, for instance, over 80% of the indigenous population is poor as compared to 18% of the non-indigenous people [27]. Likewise, the Manjo people, who are believed to be indigenous to the area [18], are forced to live far away from villages of people with regular status and occupied marginal areas not as such productive for farming [4]. Thus they are unable to harvest even for subsistence. Due to this fact, the Manjo regularly involve in non- farm sector such as hunting, exploitation of forest products like charcoal and firewood for sale. The income earned from this sector is insignificant that it compelled the Manjo to lead destitute life. They have also lesser access to social services such as education, health services and office works, which in turn leads to further isolation [25]. On top of this, the sector in which they involve has adverse impact on natural environment and wild life. In this regard [12] describes that poor people often put unsustainable burden on the natural resources in their immediate environment. Though researches have been conducted on marginalized peoples in Ethiopia, no or little attention is given to interrelationship between folklore and social marginalization. In addition, attention is not yet given to environmental implication of the marginalization. For marginalized people, everything is terrible; problems are interwoven, reinforce each other, and even deepen their isolation. Today’s prejudice in folklore will be left as a legacy for the generations to come. This persists the problems associated with it. Besides, the interrelationships among marginalization, poverty and environmental degradation form a kind of poverty cycle. Therefore, unless proper intervention is taken, these problems continue to exist and worsen the socio-economic life of the people under consideration. This research thus aims at investigating the roles of folklore on social marginalization of the Manjo people and its implications on livelihoods and environmental wellbeing. It attempts to answer the following relevant questions:

- ❖ How do the folklore cause and legitimize social marginalization of the people?
- ❖ Does marginalization affect livelihood options of the Manjo people?
- ❖ How can social marginalization affect environmental wellbeing of the areas?

### ***1.3 Objectives of the Study***

The main objective of this study is to assess the roles of folklore on social marginalization of the Manjo people and its implications on livelihoods and environmental wellbeing. Specifically, the study attempted to:

- ❖ examine the how folklore causes and legitimizes social marginalization of the people;
- ❖ explore the effects of marginalization the livelihoods of the Manjo people; and
- ❖ investigate the environmental implications of marginalization.

### ***1.4 Significance of the Study***

Marginalization has diverse economic, social, cultural, political and environmental consequences. It loosens

social integration; deprives people of various economic opportunities; retards the active participation of citizens in the economy and erodes people's identity and self-esteem. It also provokes instability and insecurity. Furthermore, it forces people to devise merely short term survival strategies at the expense of sustainability. In a nutshell, marginalization stunts any development efforts and hence, it is an obstacle for sustainable development. Needless to say, sustainable development is the goal of any society. To this end, a thorough understanding of the problems and seeking plausible solutions are unquestionably imperative. Hence, this study is supposed to have the following contributions,

- ❖ It may help non-governmental organizations, local planners and administrative bodies to be aware of the root causes of marginalization of the Manjo people so that they can take appropriate remedial actions against the problem.
- ❖ The findings of this research could also serve as a feedback for policy makers in the sense that information of a more local situations of different parts of a country is of crucial importance in order to design appropriate policies and strategies that compromise spatial disparities.
- ❖ Besides, the study is hoped to serve as a stepping stone for other research works in the area.
- ❖ Furthermore, it may fill the existing literature gap on the issue about the study areas.

### ***1.5 Scope of the Study***

The Manjo people dwell in many parts of the Southern Nations Nationalities Peoples of the Regional States of Ethiopia. However, the study is limited to Bonga and Dawro towns and their environs. The study basically focused on the contribution of folklore, for marginalization of the Manjo people as well as the environmental consequences of marginalization.

### ***1.6 Limitations of the study***

Financial problem is one of the commonly mentioned limitations of research works in least developed countries like Ethiopia. Consequently, the university has a very limited range of money allotted to finance research projects. Considering this financial constraint, the study was limited to Bonga and Dawro towns and their surroundings. Besides, as the research project had to be conducted in parallel with teaching duties in the university and finalized in the university's regulated time schedule, time had its own constraining influence on the study. Furthermore, two of the woreda officers specifically in the Bonga town were not cooperative in providing information about the issue under discussion pretending as if there was no problem of discriminations in their areas. Nevertheless, let alone by closely seeing the situation, even one can easily understand the seriousness of the problem by reading notice boards erected everywhere on the roadside reminding "... don't discriminate Manjo".

### ***1.7 Research Methods and Procedures of the Study***

This study is a qualitative descriptive survey that involved the following methods and procedures of data collection.

### ***1.7.1 Research Methods***

The study involved both primary and secondary sources of data. Primary data were collected in two months fieldwork (February and March 2014) using the following methods of data collection: active observation, interview, and case study. Besides, to capture recent developments on the issue under discussions, additional key informant interview and observations were also made in June 2019. Active observation characterizes most ethnographic research and is crucial to effective fieldwork. The study employed this method to see the interaction of the community under study with their environment and the surrounding society. The observation focused on the day-to-day activities of the community and the treatment of the outsiders. Relevant events and actual performances were captured by video camera. And tape recorder was used to record stylistic and intonational sounds. Interview is the ethnographer's most important data gathering technique. Valuable information about the marginalization of the community, personal narratives, myths, legends, tales, proverbs, and jokes were collected from knowledgeable elders and resourceful persons both from the insiders and the outsiders. For this purpose, the study employed semi-structured interview. This interview served to gather data for comparison and putting them in the context of common group beliefs and themes. In addition, the study also employed case study to identify the actual marginalization experience of the community. This case material helps to look into the extent to which the marginalization restricts the day-to-day activities of the community and its impact on natural environment. Furthermore, document analysis, a systematic method for finding, selecting, appraising, evaluating, and synthesizing secondary data, though frequently used in combination with other qualitative research methods; it has also been used as a stand-alone method in the areas of specifically historical and cross-cultural studies [2]. Accordingly, the method was employed to systematically select, appraise, evaluate, and synthesize various secondary sources of data (printed, electronic, published or unpublished resources) so as to complement, supplement, or triangulate the aforesaid primary sources of data.

### ***1.7.2 Procedures of the Study***

#### ***1.7.2.1 Selection of the Research Site***

After making pre- surveys in the area and consulting available data, Bonga and Dawro surroundings were selected for the study. The selection of these sites is due to the following reasons. Even though the community under study lives in many parts of Southern Ethiopia, some evidences during the survey indicated that the Manjo are marginalized severely in these areas. Besides, environmental pressure associated with marginalization is more serious in these areas in comparison to the other localities.

#### ***1.7.2.2 Selection of Key Informants***

Some people are more articulate and culturally sensitive than others. These individuals make excellent key actors or informants. Informants can provide detailed historical data, knowledge about contemporary interpersonal relationship, and a wealth of information about the nuance of everyday life. Selection of such resourceful informants requires careful attention. So for this study 20 resourceful persons were selected purposefully both from the insiders and the outsiders. After selecting the right informants, the necessary data

were organized according to some similarities. Then, the data were analyzed in accordance with the stated procedures. To capture recent developments in the issue under discussion, five additional key informants from Manjo and four from the non-Manjo were interviewed in June 2019.

## **2. Results and Discussions**

### **2.1 Origin of Social Discrimination**

Every nation, people, or community has its own stories and myths that help to preserve and prolong the traditions which assist them in constructing their identity (Bausch,1999) cited in [9]. In this aspect, elders of the Manjo people were requested to tell about their origin. Consequently, they revealed that the three clans of the area, namely, Manjo, Kafa and Bench were believed to be emerged from the ground through a single hole somewhere around Lake Tana, Amahara region. Each of the three clans came out to the surface holding a distinct material signifying its destiny. Hence, the materials emerged with the Manjo, Kafa and Bench were ‘toto’- net like trap, horse loading rope, and cattle restraining rope respectively. ‘Toto’- net like trap was assumed to be pointing that the Manjo’s predetermined occupation was hunting. Horse loading rope was implying Kafa’s fate to be trading. Whereas cattle restraining rope entailed that the predetermined livelihood for Bench was herding. So each clan engaged in an activity to which it was created for. The creation of this myth has a power to shape the thought of the people that their occupations were predetermined by supernatural forces and couldn’t be changed by their efforts. As described in Merriam-Webster Dictionary, symbol is “something that stands for or suggests something else by reason of relationship, association, convention, or accidental resemblance”. In this case, ‘toto’ symbolizes hunting; horse loading rope symbolizes trading and cattle restraining rope symbolizes ~~for~~ herding. Symbols, as stated in [19] make it possible to think of what it is not present, and thus they assist to reflect upon the past and plan the future, and to explore associations with the other(s) and speculate about the unknown. By collectively shaping such symbolic patterns we construct a world and give ourselves specific positions in it”. Moreover, “Oppressors and oppressed alike have used folklore to further their own accounts of history”. Written evidence supported this myth as follows. “Historically the Manjo ~~Manjo~~ had a kingdom of their own ruled by a-‘great king,’ Manjo tato, but they were driven into the forest, where they were conquered by the kafa [28]. Incorporated into the Kafa kingdom, the Manjo tato become subservient to the Kafa king, Kafi-tato [28]. Food-based slurs not only denigrate people but also dehumanize them [16]. The following myth justifies how the stereotype has come to existence and fosters marginalization of Manjo. Then Manjo made its way southwards following the course of the Omo River and settled in the present day Kafa area. Following the foot step of Manjo, the remaining two clans came to the area. The Manjo, being the first settler, reigned in the area and ruled the whole clans. However, with increasing of their number and learning the system of ruling, the two non-ruling clans started plotting and looking for ways of dethroning the Manjo. In the meantime, there came a very severe famine in the area. People from the three clans went to the forest for hunting and in search of food. In the forest they found a small animal called “Shikoko” in Amharic, squirrel, killed it and prepared it for food. But Gumero refused to eat the food. They revealed that they would be sick if they took it; and hence, preferred dying to taking taboo food. Whereas the Manjo did not want to die in hunger and ate the food. Gumero took the skin of that animal secretly and went back to the king and requested him to call the whole people for meeting. Once the Gumero got the whole people gathered, they made the skin

to be observed publicly and accused the Manjo was eating taboo food. They disclosed that they have to be no more ruled by the Manjo king and thus, evicted the king to the forest. Since then the Manjo have been marginalized and living alone in the forest. This story falls under the categorization of explanatory tales. According to [21] "An explanatory tale is ... a story that sets out primarily to explain the origin of one of a whole range of things or ideas within a community's environment and experience". Hence, the above explanatory tale explains how Manjo lost its power and marginalized from the very beginning. The tale seems to have two purposes. On the one hand, it explains the cause of the power shift from Manjo to Kafa and on the other hand, it serves as a means to legitimize the statuses of the two communities. According to [24]: stories are a means of socializing children in all cultures. Stories told in childhood may be connected with intense bonds of love that the child has for her or his caregiver (s) during the time of life when she or he is most helpless. Such story telling is also a process of political socialization and teaches about identity, power, and inter-group relations. Family story telling is also a means through which inter-communal conflicts and identity-based prejudice are transmitted through generations. In line with the hypothesis related to occupational minorities of Ethiopia, "one considers them as remainders of an earlier race or as submerged or outcast groups parallel to the untouchables of India". Orthodox Christianity has had a role in integrating some and distancing other minorities. The food habits of the Manjo and Mana are considered incompatible with the food taboos of the church, thus accentuating the marginalization of these groups. This cultural difference has been perpetuated by the characterization of the Manjo and Mana as non-believers or 'pagans' and therefore they are not entitled to bury their dead in church compounds[1]. There are also some stories which articulate and elucidate the 'tactical' status shift from Manjo to Gummaro in another ways. For instance, a 26 years Manjo informant narrated us the following myth which explains how the first King of Kafa (Manjo) lost his status. While Manjo was king of Kafa, a very handsome Gumero was serving the King of Manjo in the Palace. On a day that the king took traditional medicine for tape worm and staying at home, a chicken was cooked to the King. Being a servant the Gumero boy was used to be given only the head of the chicken. Meanwhile, the King got a 'revelation' and was told that today a man eating the head of the slaughtered chicken will take the throne. Soon after the revelation the king got a serious stomach ache and went to the toilet. He was not in a position to go back swiftly to home to get the head of the chicken as he was with problem of severe constipation. By the time the King went back to home, the servant had already eaten the head of the chicken and left for work. The King requested his wife to give him the head of the chicken. But as it was the servant's frequent share and was in hurry for work, she told the King that the servant had already had it. The King did not want to overlook his revelation. Hence, he ordered his followers to provide the servant gold and all other things necessary for crowning and made him sat on the golden throne. Since then the Manjo have been the slaves of the Gumero clan. Rules were also set to determine the relationship of the two clans. Hence, the Manjo as slaves did not live in the Gumero's houses. Rather they were made to live in isolated places and performed various work for Gumero receiving order from Gumero through representatives of Manjo. From the above mythic legend, one can understand that the Manjo have been cultivated to accept the shift of power was done by the will of supernatural force. At the same time they have been socialized to believe that they are unclean, inferior to other clans and servant of Gumero. This myth which encoded the power relationship shaped both insiders and the outsiders and served as a cornerstone to legitimize the marginalization. This is because it would make the insiders hard to challenge the relationship. At the same time it would make the outsiders hard to question the existing slave-lord relationship. In addition to



the non-Manjo people, the legend has helped the outsiders to legitimize their superiority over the Manjo people in all walks of life. The following account from [18] showed that the Manjo have developed a behavior related to status shift. Even in the gatherings where the speeches were collected, when quoting the greetings that show submission, many of the elderly speakers automatically also bent their heads. The word *yittiqqi* (going with one's head down) is used in relation to the Manjo. In the myth that tells about how the Manjo lost their status, "going with one's head down" has consequences: After being fooled by the Gomaro into doing things that could be used against him so that he lost his position as king, Manjo, because of going with his head down, mistakenly thought that a Gomaro he met was god and greeted him accordingly, the Gomaro response being "If you go with your head down (showing respect to me), let it be so. Hence, folklore of the Manjo and the people in their environs seems to have been playing a significant role for their marginalization. Because the understanding of right and wrong are encoded in the stories. The oral transmission of these legend from person to person and from generation to generation has contributed to the persistence of the problem of marginalization because "Oppressors and oppressed alike have used folklore to further their own accounts of history" [19]. Reference [18] added the following story that explains how a Manjo king gave power to the Gomaro. "..... the Manjo king named Dallo was advised by a Gomaro to do something (drink beer or marry many wives) and when the Manjo king did that, it was said that he could no longer be in power because of his behavior. The Manjo king gave power to the Maatto (Kafa) on his own free will since he was fooled". The same source also indicates that interviewees among the Kafa narrated the same story, "the Manjo king gave power by his own free will after behaving in an inappropriate manner". The only difference with interviews was that the, "role of a Gomaro as an advisor was not mentioned. All this happened in the mythical past". Moreover, Reference [29] described the story nearly in the same way as follows: The people on the earth first made Manjo king. But then, Manjo's behavior began to bother the people on the earth since he ate everything; he even ate the meat of colobus. The people began to hate Manjo. Manjo found out that they hated him, so he freely gave up his position as king to Matto. Matto did not ask for the kingship. He was given it by Manjo. Matto and Manjo never fought with each other, and the people on the earth thought that they were brothers. From the above stories, one can understand how Manjo and Kafa identities have been constructed, maintained and legitimized. Therefore, to deconstruct this long standing social discrimination, it is better for studies to focus on reversing the existing oral narratives of the areas.

## ***2.2 Marginalization and Its Social Consequences***

Attempts have been made to minimize the problem of stigmatization of the Manjo by both government and non-government organizations such as Farm Africa and Action Aid Ethiopia. To this effect, in Bonga and Gimbo towns, it was very common to see iron sheet made notice boards heralding that "all people have equal rights before law; and thus, don't marginalize the Manjo". Besides, though it was an occasional practice, interviewees revealed that police were assigned to control and supervise owners of hotels preventing the Manjo not to be served in their hotels. Children of the Manjo people are not able to sit and learn with children of the non-Manjo. Moreover, whenever, the school is far away from their home to make daily commuting; renting houses from non-Manjo people is almost unthinkable. This makes the Manjo to remain dominantly illiterate. In support of this, Reference [29] revealed that the Kafa even today oppose leasing rooms to Manjo. Consequently, it is a challenge for the Manjo to reside near high schools as a result of which numerous students drop out of schools.

Hence, only a few Manjos finish schools. Reference [26] also revealed that owing to the existing socio-economic marginalization, the Manjo students' academic achievement is lower than the non-Manjo. Due to the social discriminations, the social relationships of Manjo students in the schools are mostly limited to their own identity. From our field observation, we have also learnt that even a certified teacher from the Manjo clan is not able to carry out his duties smoothly. He has been suffering from the problem of marginalization nearly in the same way as that of his relatives. He cannot touch his students as it is still believed that he is unclean. Even parents of the students warn him that if he touches their children, he revealed, they would retaliate him. For the reason that he may touch students while walking in between rows or correcting class works, assignments, etc, he is made to sit idly. He is idly getting salary. Besides, he could not get house for renting so that he is forced to live in an old Kebele house located in the periphery of the town. In this regard [6] revealed that discrimination of a minority group can happen in the housing area, workplace, market place, educational settings, health institutions, and the criminal justice system. Specifically, the author clearly displayed the social discrimination of the Manjo as follows. "The discriminatory acts against the Manjo ethnic minorities are manifested by keeping them at distance, psychological inhibition, material deprivation, and communication restrictions. Most of these actions are known to prevail for more than half a century. In Kafa zone, the Manjo ethnic minority are often denied from simple hand shaking that is more of keeping physical distance to exchange of goods as economic functioning, denying co-utilization of services, freedom of movement and choice". Inter-clan marriage between Manjo and the non-Manjo people is unthinkable. From field survey, we have learnt that ActionAid Ethiopia, working in Dawro and other Manjo residing areas, advertise to grant 80, 000 Birr to those non Manjo people who dare to break the social boundary and make inter clan marriage with the Manjo People. But no one was bold enough to do so. Reference [28] also stated the absence of intermarriage between Manjo and Kafa. In support of this [8] depicted that intermarriage between members of the low and high status groups is one aspect of taboo in the social discrimination. As stated in [28], prior to Derg regime whenever a "Manjo encountered a Kafa on the road side, the Manjo had to humiliate himself, stepping aside, bowing, and greeting the Kafa with the phrase showocchi qebona (literally, let me prostrate myself on the ground)." But our data revealed that the Manjo people, particularly old age group still have shown extreme reverence to non-Manjo societies. The respect they exercise goes to the extent that they worship to the non Manjo as the Orthodox do to the arc of covenant. Indeed, the young generations are now abandoning the tradition of humiliating themselves in front of the non-Manjo.

### ***2.3 Stigmatization and Livelihood of Manjo People***

As it is the case in all parts of rural Ethiopia, the economy of both Kafa and Dawro people is basically agriculture. They involve in crop cultivation, rearing of animals and honey production. The major crops cultivated include cereals, oil crops, pulses, spices and cash crops. The major livestock bred include cattle, sheep, goats, donkeys, chickens and others. However, the Manjo people involve in separate sectors such as hunting, firewood and charcoal production and selling and pottery making. The Manjo people are not active participants of agricultural sector. This has got its own deep rooted reasons. The Manjo people have got no equal access to farm lands. Most of the time, they occupy marginal lands such as steep slope and forest periphery areas which are not suitable for crop farming. Thus, these people are forced to embrace what they think most appropriate activities in such environmental setting. In earlier times, according to the report of Manjo

elders, the Manjo clear forests to have farm lands. However, they didn't have the chance to stay there long and cultivate. This is because the non-Manjo needed to succeed their land as it was made comfortable for cultivation. Moreover, even if it is known that in subsistence farming, production is oriented towards home consumption, peasants have to sell some part of their crops to meet their remaining basic needs. But the non-Manjos were and still are reluctant to purchase agricultural products from the Manjo people. This is because the Manjo are perceived to be unclean which discourage Manjo's involvement in crop production.

Nevertheless, in contrast to this idea, Reference [28] stated that: "Today, most Manjo engage in farming. The lifestyle of the Manjo no longer differs from that of the Kafa farmers who cultivate staples for food, including maize, sorghum, wheat, barley, *tef*, *enset*, beans, and so. Some Manjo cultivate coffee as a cash crop and keep bees, and some are even wealthier than the Kafa. Like the Kafa, the Manjo have cows, bulls, goats, sheep, fowl, horses, and so on. Those Manjo who do not own enough land to farm may make their living by selling firewood and charcoal. In this regard the Manjo are now far from being "hunters". The Manjo are also poorly participating in livestock farming. For instance, it is believed to be taboo for a Manjo to eat mutton. Hence, as stated above, the Manjo are dominantly engaged in hunting, firewood and charcoal production and sale as well as pottery. The tradition of hunting among the Manjo people is related to their mythical legend. Because as it has been indicated earlier, the Manjo was believed to have emerged from the ground with net signifying their fate of livelihood.

#### **2.4 Environmental Influence of Marginalization**

As it has been already discussed earlier, marginalization of the Manjo people oblige them to engage in economically precarious and environmentally unfriendly activities such hunting, fuel wood and charcoal production and sale and pottery. Our field surveys indicate that about 234 bundles of fuel wood, 235 sacks of charcoal and 86 bundles or poles of green wood for construction are entering the town of Bonga on daily basis. These entail that every year, 85,410 bundles (2,989.4 tones) of fuel wood, 85,775 sacks (1,372.4 tones) of charcoal and 31,390 bundles or poles (1,098.7 tones) of green wood have been harvested. Therefore, these amounts of wood collection clearly imply the destruction of large area of forest and woodland. Needless to say, destruction of forests, woodland and bush land has diverse repercussions such as climatic change, acceleration of soil erosion, reduction of biodiversity, etc. This in turn negatively affects the income of the people in the area in particular and the economy of the country in general. The following sample pictures depict the situation.



**Figure 1:** A Manjo woman carrying sacks of charcoal

- on average, one bundle of fuel wood = 35kg
- on average, one sack of charcoal = 16kg
- on average, one bundle or one pole of green wood = 35kg



**Figure 2:** A Manjo woman carrying fuel wood



**Figure 3:** A Manjo man carrying pole

As already indicated earlier, hunting is believed to be the Manaja's predetermined occupation. Hunting is still one of the major sources of livelihood. They hunt animals like pigs, antelope, Columbus monkey, porcupine, etc. Hunting of these animals is contributing to the dwindling of their number and even may lead to their extinction. This undoubtedly causes ecological imbalance in the area. In addition, eating the meat of these animals, which are not eaten by the non-Manjo, make them to be considered as unclean and untouchable people.

### **3. Conclusion and Recommendations**

#### **3.1 Conclusion**

Folklore is one of the major factors that deepens and sustains marginalization of the Manjo people. It makes the Manjo to believe that they are weaker, less intellect, inferior, less human than the non-Manjo. Such dogmatic

belief of the Manjo people about themselves makes them to accept and tolerate their mistreatment by the non Manjo publicly. On the other hand, the folklore and its oral transmission from generation to generation, helps the non Manjo to justify their mistreating the Manjo. Though there are attempts made to minimize the marginalization of the Manjo people by both the government and some non-governmental organizations, the problem remains almost as it has been. Even, evidences indicate that because of the strategies utilized to lessen the problem, the condition is likely to be worsened in some cases. This is because of the fact that following the efforts of the government and non-governmental organizations to reduce the stigmatization, some enlightened Manjo people start to claim equal right which made the non Manjo to be furious of the condition and further complicated the problem. Hence, the Manjo have been suffering from multitude problems of marginalization. It is less likely for the Manjo to get service in the hotels; to find houses for renting; to exchange different goods- particularly edible goods such as grain, fruits, and the like with the non Manjo in the market; to have inter-clan marriage with the non-Manjo people. According to [2] people who are marginalized have relatively little control over their lives, and the resources available to them. Likewise, the study indicates that people of Manjo have relatively low access to various resources of the area such as fertile land. Even they don't have a market demand for their meagre agricultural products. Thus, they are compelled to engage in less productive and precarious activities like in fuel wood and charcoal production and sale, pottery and hunting. The income gained from such activities is not commonly enough even for survival. Poor people show little interest in environmental conservations because they are preoccupied with their own acute problems of poverty. The poorest people are too often forced to meet short term survival needs at the expense of sustainability [27]. Hence, the Manjo people have been destructing the surrounding forests for fuel wood and charcoal and chasing wild life for food with no or little concern for the environmental welfare.

### **3.2 Recommendations**

Based on the findings and the conclusions made, the following plausible solutions have been forwarded.

- ❖ To bring long lasting and sustained peace in a given society, making an in-depth study and analysis on the problem at hand is indispensable. In the absence of which any kind of measures to be taken may end unexpected results. For instance, in Daworo, an NGO declared in public to grant an incentive of 80,000 Birr for those non Manjo who marry Manjo's daughters or sons. This was supposed as a means to narrow the social gap. And also in Kafa, a small town called Shishinda, police told the people as if there is no difference between clans. However, such attempts of minimizing the problem of marginalization of the Manjo people by both governmental and non-governmental organizations have brought almost no change towards the positive, rather, in some cases; the attempt further complicated the problem. This is because of the fact that the strategies utilized did not consider the popular attitude prevailing in the area. So any attempt of minimizing and eradicating the discrimination of the Manjo people needs analyzing and understanding the deep-rooted folklore made on the 'who' are of the Manjo and changing the negative attitude.
- ❖ The Manjo people have been engaging themselves in the less productive, environmentally unfriendly and precarious activities like in fuel wood and charcoal production and sale, pottery and hunting. They engage themselves in such activities partly due to their relatively less access to land resource and partly

they have been discouraged by their less market access to their farm products. Because the non-Manjo's are not ready to buy farm products of the Manjo people, who are considered as unclean. Hence, firstly, government agents and non-governmental organizations should focus on improving the Manjo people's access to land and helping them to raise their farm productivity and their income. So that they can change their food ways and in turn attitude of the non Manaja to towards them and at the same time, the repercussion of their way of life on the environment will be minimized. That is why [20] argue that for environmental policies to succeed in less developed countries, governments must first address the issue of land less ness, poverty and lack of access to institutional resources. Secondly, government agents and non-governmental organizations should help them looking for markets for their farm products outside the local market as a short term solution and working towards improving the negative perception of the non-Manjo people for the long run.

- ❖ Finally, for financial and time reasons, our study was limited to Bonga and Dawro towns and their surroundings. However, the Manjo people have been dwelling in many zones of Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Regional State, namely, in Kafa, Sheka, Benchi Maji, and Dawro zones as well as in Konta special woreda. They also occupy some parts of Oromia and Gambella regional states [28]. Hence, we would like to suggest a comprehensive further research to have vivid spatial variations of social discriminations against this minority group and quantify its environmental impacts.

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Lemma Nigatu Tarekegn & Mulu Getachew Mengistu, Jimma University, September, 2019

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